



Company News

## **Martin Engineering: Online Interactive Conveyor Training**

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*Neponset (IL), United States -*

“The pandemic has impacted our ability to teach traditional classes at customer sites,” explained PE Todd Swinderman, CEO Emeritus of Martin Engineering and an industry veteran with more than 40 years of hands-on experience. “But it doesn’t reduce the need for conveyor operators and facility managers to obtain the benefits and continuing education credits those sessions provide.”



Martin Engineering has created a series of online modules for remote conveyor training. (Pictures: ©Martin Engineering)

In response to the restrictions that the virus has placed on face-to-face learning, Martin has created a series of interactive online modules based on the same non-commercial curriculum that has served bulk material handlers so well over the years. Designed to keep attendees engaged and organized into 90-120 minute segments, the virtual classes cover topics such as best practices for safety, fugitive material control and belt tracking. Upon completion, attendees are eligible to receive either Professional Development Unit (PDU) or Continuing

Education Unit (CEU) credits.

“The Foundations online seminars deliver non-commercial, topic-specific problem-solving information that can be put to immediate use,” said Swinderman.

“There’s no sales pitch, and even the most remote locations can take advantage,” he added.

“Conveyors are one of the best productivity-enhancing tools available, but conveyor injuries cost employers millions of dollars annually,” observed Customer Development Manager Jerad Heitzler, an instructor of Martin’s safety workshops since 2010. “Because of the size of their material cargos, the speed of their operation, and the amount of energy they consume and contain, conveyors have been shown to be a leading cause of industrial accidents, including serious injuries and fatalities. But injuries are preventable with the right training, preparation and safety precautions.”



Conveyor operators and facility managers can obtain continuing education credits from the online training sessions.

According to Heitzler, the company's preferred platform is Zoom, but its expert trainers also have experience with Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Webex. "We like Zoom, because it provides the best experience for the learner," he continued. "It integrates very well with our marketing software HubSpot, so learners can easily register using Martin URLs. We can also prepare specialized content that is highly valuable to them, including sharing job stories, additional content videos, relevant blog articles and Foundations book downloads."

“Our platform has been built to increase attendee engagement as much as possible,” Heitzler added. “Many trainers don’t use the available platform features effectively, because they were thrust into online training as a result of the pandemic. But we’ve worked hard at using engagement features to increase learner participation, with options such as a raise hand button, chat, Q and A, screen sharing, white boards, private breakout rooms and polling.”



The online seminars deliver topic-specific problem-solving information, with no sales pitch.

Heitzler said that the Martin team has taught approximately 2,000 attendees using video conferencing since the onset of the virus. “We’ve presented these modules to learners in coal handling plants, cement manufacturing, aggregate production and pulp and paper mills,” he said. “We’ve also provided training for industry consultants, service providers and engineering firms who design conveyors and plants.”

The company also engages with customers in a variety of other ways, including free webinars on critical concepts and best practices, as well as blog posts with insights by leading professionals detailing their experiences in the bulk handling industry. Customers can always reach Martin’s industry experts via phone, live chat, email or social media, and its industry reference books in the Foundations series can be downloaded in any of five languages from the company’s website at no charge.

Martin has a long history of investing in conveyor training for its customers since putting out its first problem/solution literature in the 1980s. The company followed up with its first edition of Foundations in the 1990s, a 500+ page volume that has become an internationally-recognized resource for safety, maintenance and operations training -- with more than 20,000 print copies in circulation around the world. Swinderman estimates that the firm has trained more than 50,000 miners, operators, maintenance staff and management personnel around the world.

There are two standard tracks, one for maintenance and operations personnel that stresses safe work practices and solutions to common conveyor problems, and one designed for technical and management personnel that emphasizes the design and operation of conveyors for safety and productivity. In addition, Martin trainers and engineers can custom design programs not only for customers using conveyors but for those needing training on the application of industrial vibration, air cannons and silo cleaning.

“Both methods of training are highly interactive, effective and non-commercial, focusing on delivering timely information that can be put to immediate use,” Swinderman concluded. Training can be provided in a number of languages, with details available from regional Martin Engineering locations.